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TRAFFIC CONTROL, SAFETY AND CONVENIENCE OF TRAFFIC

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7.00 General Policy

It is the policy of the Maintenance Program to keep State highways open to traffic and to provide for its safe movement. Maintenance operations may be varied to meet climatic conditions, location and volume of traffic. The first consideration is for the safety and convenience of traffic during either routine or emergency work.

On heavily traveled freeways, lane closures can cause severe congestion and result in accidents and delays to the motorists. Before any work is done on a highway which requires closing of one or more lanes, careful consideration must be given to effects such an operation will have on traffic. Work requiring lane closures should be scheduled during periods of the day when the delay to the motorist will be a minimum.

In periods of emergency, the most important things should be done first, either to save the highway or structure or provide a temporary road for traffic. Traffic should be protected at slides, slip outs, washouts or repair work affecting the traveled way by the placing of appropriate signs or barriers, supplemented at night by warning lights.

The Department of Transportation and its District Maintenance Branches have the authority to close any state highway to protect the public or to protect the highway from damage during storms. The highway may also be closed during construction, improvement or maintenance operations. The California Highway Patrol, (CHP) is authorized to direct traffic, which includes stopping traffic, or expediting traffic for any purpose that will insure safety. Stopping traffic could be the result of road failures, severe traffic conditions resulting from accidents, severe weather conditions resulting from heavy snow or rainfall or any other phenomenon that would endanger traffic using the highway.

7.01 Cooperation with the California Highway Patrol

The California Highway Patrol has furnished the following statement in response to our inquiry regarding their handling of accidents and Vehicle Code violations in vicinity of work being done on the highway by employees of the Department of Transportation:

It is recognized that Department of Transportation employees are often called upon to work under hazardous conditions and their safety is jeopardized by any careless or incompetent driver. They must depend upon the operators of passing motor vehicles to observe the provisions of law which have been established for their protection.

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The California Highway Patrol recognizes the danger presented by careless and incompetent drivers. Since CHP officers are responsible for the enforcement of the Vehicle Code and other laws relating to vehicle traffic, they will do everything in their power to apprehend and prosecute violators. In addition, they wish to be advised of unusually hazardous conditions prior to an accident occurring.

After an accident has occurred, an officer cannot issue a citation for a misdemeanor that was not committed in his or her presence (Penal Code 836). If the investigation and the statement of witnesses and victims indicate a violation, a complaint will be filed in the appropriate court and a warrant issued. At trial it is necessary for the witnesses and victim to testify in court and identify the violator. A citation will be issued at the scene when an accident occurs and a traffic violation is personally observed by an officer. In cases of hazardous driving not resulting in an accident, a Caltrans employee who thinks prosecution is required must sign a complaint in the appropriate court. Accident complaints are subject to approval of the local District Attorney in many areas.

Caltrans employees who are in the vicinity of an accident should cooperate with the investigating officer in every way possible to see that he or she obtains the necessary evidence to support a complaint and prosecution of violators. Employees should be alert to get names, addresses and license numbers of possible witnesses to aid in successful prosecution.

The California Highway Patrol upon receipt of inquiries of supervisors, superintendents, or other Caltrans officials, will explain the results of their investigation in any accident involving highway equipment or personnel and their reasons for the issuing or not issuing a complaint against the violator.

7.02 Highway Closure Notification

Section 21400-21401 of the Vehicle Code provides that the Department shall determine and publicize specifications for uniform types of warning signs, lights and devices to be placed upon a highway by any person performing work which interferes with or endangers the safe movement of traffic upon such highway. Pursuant to this authority, a "Manual of Traffic Controls for Construction and Maintenance Work Zones", hereafter referred to as "Manual of Traffic Controls", has been prepared and distributed to the general public throughout the State.

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7.03 Notification of Highway Closure, Lane Closure, Controlled Traffic, Chain Control or Incident of Significant Media Attention

The District Office Dispatch Center or Traffic Management Center (TMC) should be advised immediately by telephone or radio, whenever a highway is closed, or lane closures, controlled traffic, chain controls or any incident of significant media attention is in effect. A highway is considered closed when all lanes, of a divided highway, in any direction are not passable or when both lanes of an undivided two lane highway are not passable. Routes are considered closed even if traffic is moving on the shoulder or via a detour. The closure may be occasioned by snow, slides, slip outs, floods, accidents or other causes. This information should be routed through channels--Supervisors to Superintendent to District Division Chiefs of Maintenance and Operations and designated District Duty Officers--but direct when the Superintendent is not immediately available. The District Dispatch Office or Traffic Management Center (TMC), in turn, shall immediately advise the Headquarters Highway Information Center by telephone, radio, teletype or fax. The same procedure shall be followed in reporting the opening of the highway that has previously been reported closed.

All highway closures from the first and including the last day of each month shall be recorded on Form DH-M-C 83 and archived in the District Office for a period of at least 7 years. The same procedure shall be followed in reporting the opening of the Highway that has been previously reported closed.

7.03.1 Executive Reporting Procedures

It shall be the responsibility of the designated District Duty Officer to be familiar with the current Executive Reporting Guidelines. Duty Officers or alternates are to report events, as noted in the guidelines, and other significant events they feel could have a major impact on Caltrans. Reports shall be directed to the Director or to alternates listed on the weekly roster. Executive reporting shall not preclude regular reporting procedures covered in Section 7.03 above.

7.04 Bomb Threat

When a report is received that explosives or bombs have been placed on the highway system and the situation indicates that either the traveling public or our employees are in jeopardy, immediate action is to be taken to reduce such exposure to a minimum.

The Joint Operational Policy Statement between Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol specifies that "any decision to close a highway will rest with the first member of either Department to arrive on the scene.

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Reopening of the highway will be with the concurrence of both Departments. Differences of opinion concerning closure or reopening will be resolved in favor of maximum protection for the public".

In order to insure the most rapid response to such threats, authority to take immediate action in closing a portion of the highway system is to be delegated to the lowest practical level. In Caltrans, this level will usually be defined as the field supervisor level. After taking action, the field supervisor will provide highway closure notification as indicated under Section 7.03 of this chapter. In addition, each District will develop procedures insuring prompt notification to the CHP of any actual or suspected incident involving an explosive device upon a State highway or highway related structure. These procedures include the notification of any change in status of an affected highway.

Bomb searches on State highways are the responsibility of the California Highway Patrol under the Joint Operational Policy Statement. Districts, at their own discretion, may enter into a training program with the CHP for selected employees in critical areas to aid in such searches. Selected employees should be volunteers and should be chosen because of specialized knowledge specifically needed to protect a vital segment of the highway system. Only those employees who need to participate will be allowed near a reported bomb area.

An area of concern to the CHP has been delays in obtaining specialized equipment needed during bomb searches. It will be Caltrans policy to cooperate fully in providing support and assistance to the California Highway Patrol, as provided in the Joint Operational Policy Statement. All requests from the CHP for needed equipment are to be handled expeditiously. Each District shall take the initiative in contacting the local California Highway Patrol office to formalize procedures to be used in ordering and supplying specialized equipment for bomb searches. Limitations on the use of equipment operators should be the same as for the selected employees mentioned above. In no case should untrained employees without adequate protective equipment be knowingly exposed to the hazards of an explosive device.

7.05 Emergency Detouring of Traffic

When a road has been closed and will remain closed for several hours or longer, and a detour route is available, such detours should be signed as soon as possible. See the following sections of this chapter and the Manual of Traffic Controls.

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When a road is closed and no detour is available, warning signs (illuminated at night), should be placed at the nearest towns or other convenient points to reduce unnecessary motorist travel and confusion. If conditions are recurring, the necessary signs, made up by competent workers, shall be kept on hand.

Where the closure affects a route or routes in other Districts, they must be advised at once so that the necessary detour signs may be placed.

Headquarters Office of Structures should also be informed if the closure is occasioned by failure of a bridge.

The District Office will notify the CHP and the local radio and television stations when local traffic only is affected; and also notify the major networks when a main route is closed.

7.06 Flooded Traveled Way

When the pavement is flooded but passable, workers should place flooded signs and delineators to mark the edge of the traveled way. Warning lights should be used whenever traffic would encounter some unusual or unexpected condition. Place flaggers to slow down traffic if flooded condition presents a surprise element. Provide pilot car service when necessary. Close the road as soon as it is evident the water will become too deep for safe travel.

7.07 Supply of Signs, Etc.

Each supervisor shall be supplied with sufficient signs, barricades and portable flashers to enable him/her to protect the public against emergencies which may arise in their particular territory. In locations where floods or storms may be expected to disrupt traffic, a routine check shall be made as to signs, barricades and condition of detours at the beginning of each winter season.

Each District has been furnished a supply of signs to be used exclusively for marking detours and road closures due to floods and high water. These emergency road closures, due to floods, usually occur at well known locations.

Signs for these detours should be properly maintained and be immediately available for this special use. They should not be used for any other purpose.

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7.08 Disabled and Abandoned Vehicles

The legal authority for maintenance personnel to move unattended vehicles along or from a highway is quite limited. Section 22654 (c) and (d) of the Vehicle Code permit removal by State forces of any disabled or unattended vehicle to the nearest safe and legal parking location under the following conditions:

- (A) The vehicle is obstructing traffic.
- (B) The vehicle is obstructing work being performed on the highway. This reason is applicable to otherwise legally parked vehicles only if signs announcing the parking prohibition have been posted for at least 24 hours.

If the moved vehicle cannot be easily seen from its former parking location, it is required that the owner be notified without delay. If the owner is unavailable and the location is within an incorporated city, the city police should be notified. If the location is not within a city it is necessary to notify both the Sheriff's Department and the California Highway Patrol.

If a disabled or unattended vehicle is not obstructing traffic or work on the highway it may not legally be removed by maintenance forces. Removal must be accomplished by authorized law enforcement officers as described in Vehicle Code Sections 22652, 54, 55.

Where the vehicle is clearly junk, is of no value, and has been in its abandoned location for a week or more (and the CHP refuses to see to its removal), it will then be in order for our forces to haul it to the nearest available location for junking.

When a wrecked or broken down commercial vehicle is carrying livestock or perishable cargoes, it is permissible to issue emergency permits to move on weekends or holidays, or after the usual hauling hours. Loaded butane tankers and other highly flammable or explosive cargoes are in the same category.

When it is necessary to clear a highway following a wreck, any debris or wreckage which constitutes a hazard to traffic should be immediately removed from the traveled way by State forces. Promptly thereafter, the Regional Office should communicate with the party responsible for the accident to ascertain whether he/she wishes to remove any remaining debris from the highway, or whether State forces are to remove it at his/her expense.

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In cases where death or serious injury results to any person, the damaged vehicle or vehicles should be left untouched and traffic protected by flaggers or barriers, lights, etc., until the California Highway Patrol has had an opportunity to examine the wreck. Otherwise, evidence which may be needed by the CHP or by the District Attorney's Office for the prosecution of a criminal offense may be destroyed.

In all cases of serious accidents, the maintenance forces should cooperate with the California Highway Patrol and the District Attorney's office. State maintenance forces are not required to await the arrival of insurance company representatives on the scene of an accident before removing wrecked or damaged vehicles.

In the event a Department of Transportation employee is required to aid a motorist whose vehicle has become disabled, under no circumstances shall the employee accept payment for such assistance. Gratuities shall not be accepted from tow truck operators or anyone else who may be called to assist at the scene of an accident or other disability.

Such assistance should be made only when commercial operators or CHP officers are not available.

7.09 Moving Injured Persons

Caltrans employees should use careful judgment in deciding whether to remove an injured person from the traveled way. It is preferable that this be done by or under the direction of the CHP or by an ambulance crew. Factors to be considered include:

- (A) Evident nature of the injury and probability of increasing its severity.
- (B) Danger from traffic to the injured person or others.
- (C) Danger to traffic by obstructing the traveled way.
- (D) Estimated time of arrival of the CHP or an ambulance. (See Section 8.08 for instructions covering emergency first aid.) If no CHP officer is available and it is not convenient to notify the Sheriff's office, maintenance personnel are authorized be Section 20016 of the Vehicle Code to arrange for an ambulance or some other conveyance to move the injured person to a hospital, if the injured person does not object to such transportation.

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7.10 Deceased Persons

Bodies of deceased persons are not to be moved by Caltrans employees unless the location of the bodies clearly causes a significant danger to traffic or personnel. If the CHP cannot be located, information should be sent to the sheriff or coroner, who will arrange for removal of the bodies.

7.11 Warning Traffic

When a slide, slipout or other break occurs which partially or wholly blocks the traveled way, appropriate signs should be placed at each side of the location and on the right of approaching traffic 400 to 800 feet (121.92 meters to 243.84 meters) in advance of the obstruction. That portion of the road which is obstructed shall be blocked off with barricades. At night warning lights should be placed on both signs and barricades, and a sufficient number set out along the road to outline the obstruction. This same procedure should be followed for road repair work which is not completed in one day.

- (A) On roads carrying heavy traffic, one or more flaggers should be assigned, depending on length of control and sight distance.
- (B) "Flagger Ahead" symbol (C9-A), should be placed in advance of all flagger's stations, conforming to the Manual of Traffic Controls. The distance between the sign and the flagger should be based on the average traffic speed allowing approximately 100 feet (30.48 meters) for each 10 miles (16.093 kilometers) per hour.
- (C) Where the number of cars to be controlled are such that one flagger cannot handle the control and contact the last car in line, a second sign shall be placed and a second flagger assigned.
- (D) Signs should be well lighted or reflectorized for night work.
- (E) When flaggers are required, they should be logically placed in relation to the equipment or operation so as to give adequate warning.
- (F) At the flagger's station, if barricades are not required on the traveled way, they should be placed in position on the shoulder or otherwise to indicate the control point.

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(G) All signs, barricades and other equipment should be maintained in first class condition.

Both the District Office and Headquarters Office should be notified in advance when a traffic control is to be established for an extended period of time. When the control is discontinued, signs and barricades should be removed immediately and the District Office, as well as Headquarters Office, notified of the discontinuance.

NOTE: Barricades should not be used to channelize traffic.

7.12 Flagging Traffic

Flagging of traffic should be handled in a uniform manner. Flaggers should be selected with care. They should be alert, intelligent and agile, have good hearing and be capable of favorably impressing the traveling public, as well as securing their cooperation.

All persons assigned as flaggers shall wear orange, strong yellow-green, or fluorescent versions of these colored warning garments such as vests, jackets, shirts or other approved orange warning garment. An adequate stock of orange jackets, shirts, or vests shall be kept available for the use of flaggers as required. Jackets or vests should be kept clean and in good condition. Raingear, when worn, shall be orange, strong yellow-green, or yellow.

A flagger shall not engage in argument with a driver or a passenger. If a driver refuses to obey a flagger's instructions, a record is to be taken of the license number of the car and the time of day, and a report made to the flagger's supervisor.

Refer to Section 5-04 of the Manual of Traffic Controls for proper signaling devices and procedures.

7.13 Markers and Communications Controls

When the control is relatively short but flaggers are not in position to signal each other, the control is governed by a red flag or other token given to the driver of the last car released. The flagger there holds traffic until the flag is returned to him by the last driver in the line from the opposite direction.

Refer to Section 5-02.5B of the "Manual Of Traffic Controls" for further details.

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7.14 Pilot Controls

When the control is long and it is desired to keep traffic in line or at reduced speed, as during oiling work, a pilot car should be provided in addition to the flaggers to conduct traffic through the work.

Refer to Section 5-02.5C of the Manual of Traffic Controls for details.

7.15 Time Control

When a control is necessary over a narrow section of highway for an extended period, the District Director may recommend a time control. Local newspapers, radio and television stations, also other interested agencies, shall be notified of the time the road is to be closed and opened to traffic. The control is handled by flaggers supplemented by signs and publicity as to conditions.

7.16 Barricades

Type III barricades, as distinguished from class II barricades, are larger as shown in Section 5-05.6F of the Manual Of Traffic Controls. They are intended for use after traffic has been diverted from a roadway. Traffic should be diverted by the use of cones, channelization, delineators, pavement markers, and signs, used in appropriate combinations. Type III barricades may then be used as a final closure, a positive barrier to traffic.

Type III barricades should not be used adjacent to traffic in lieu of guard rail or temporary "K" rail (concrete barrier).

Type III barricades are illustrated in Figure 5-10 of the Manual of Traffic Controls.

Type II barricades and the portable flasher support are small and light and may be easily handled and carried about. They are invaluable in maintenance operations for the protection of pavement patches, to warn traffic of damaged pavement and openings in the traveled way, and used with traffic cones in forming a transition to protect workers on the traveled way.

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7.17 Supplemental Signing

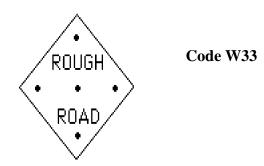
The following signs may be used within an area closed to traffic after traffic has been directed around the work:

W18 "SOFT SHOULDER" signs may be used on sections where the constructed or natural stability of the shoulder has been destroyed or impaired by maintenance or construction operations, such as in grading or spreading new material over the old. Reflectorized signs should be used on main traveled routes with unstable shoulders. Where the length of the soft shoulders is extensive, reflectorized signs should be placed at about 1 mile (1.6093 kilometer) intervals.

C2 "ROAD CLOSED" is to be placed on a barricade at the point of road closure, supplemented by one or two Type N markers.

7.18 Rough Road

This sign should be placed in advance of rough pavements as required. The road condition should be corrected as soon as possible.



7.19 Restricting Loads on Bridges

Temporary Signs. When an emergency develops due to an accident or failure of a bridge member, or when, after an investigation, it appears a structure is not capable of carrying full legal loads, temporary cloth signs shall be placed immediately. The temporary signs are to notify the public of the load limit, pending repair of the bridge or holding of a hearing and obtaining permanent signs. The Districts should obtain a small supply of cloth signs, with blank space for filling in the weight or speed restrictions, so that they will be immediately available when required. Cloth signs may be secured from the Service and Supply Warehouses.

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Permanent Signs. Standard Code R20, Truck Weight Limit, and R21, Bridge Speed Limit signs, with limits as recommended by the Bridge Engineer, shall be erected to replace such temporary signs if the bridge cannot be repaired or strengthened within a reasonable time. Ordering of such signs need not wait upon the formal posting order. These signs shall be placed not more than 500 feet (152.4 meters) from each end of the bridge or structure.

Where a detour is not available at the site of a posted bridge and trucks would have no opportunity to turn around and retrace their path, advance signs shall be erected to notify truck drivers of the restriction, thus affording them the opportunity of selecting another route. The following is a suggested wording for such advance signs:

LOAD LIMIT 10 TONS (9.072 TONNE) ON BRIDGE 5 MILES (8.0465 KM) AHEAD

7.20 Restricting Loads on Highways

When, as provided in Section 35751 of the Vehicle Code, a weight limit is declared on a State highway, standard signs shall be erected at each end of the portion of highway affected and at such other points as are deemed necessary to give adequate notice of such weight limitations.

7.21 Explosives

The following signs have been standardized for use in the handling, and storage of explosives:

This sign shall be placed upon the premises on which powder magazines are located. It shall be placed within 100 feet (30.48 meters) of the magazine, and so placed that a bullet through the sign will not strike the magazine.

EXPLOSIVES KEEP OFF 54" X 36" (1.371 m) X (0.914 m) 8" (.2032 m) Red Letters on White Background

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Signs with this wording shall be placed on each side of blasting operations by the flaggers to stop traffic. The signs shall be removed or turned away from traffic when it is safe to proceed.

BLASTING AHEAD STOP AT FLAGGER 30" X 24" (0.762 m) X (0.609 m) 4" (0.1016 m) Red Letters on White Background

7.22 State Property

This sign is to be used at stockpiles, isolated buildings, etc., to identify State property.

STATE PROPERTY 21" X 15" (0.533 m) X (0.381 m) Embossed Black Letters on Yellow Background

7.23 Dumping Prohibited

This sign is not to be used on State highways where it is visible to traffic. It may be used at borrow pits or other locations where the message is required. The Code R47 (litter) sign shall be used exclusively to convey this message to traffic on the State highways.

DUMPING PROHIBITED 32" X 14" (0.812 m) X (0.355 m) 4" (0.1016 m) Red Letters on White Background

7.24 Pilot Car Service

Refer to Section 5.02.5C of attached Manual of Traffic Controls

PILOT CAR FOLLOW ME C 26 36" X 18" (0.914 m) X (0.451 m) 5" (0.127 m) Black Letters and Border on Orange Background

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7.25 Traffic Controls in Snow Areas

- (A) **Speed Regulations.** Section 22363 of the Vehicle Code authorizes the Department of Transportation to erect appropriate speed limit signs for prima facie speeds of 40 miles (64.37 kilometers), 35 miles (56.33 kilometers), 30 miles (48.28 kilometers) or 25 miles (40.23 kilometers) per hour when, by reason of snow or ice conditions such speeds are most reasonable or safe. The standard Code R2 sign should be used when required. Such speed limit signs may be placed and removed as snow and ice conditions vary. The only sign to be used to regulate speed in the snow areas is the Code R2. It has been the practice to install Code R2 signs in the vicinity of resorts, ski tows, and at other critical locations where skiers and children frequently cross the highway. These speed limits should be established by the District Traffic Engineer.
- (B) **Parking Regulations.** Section 22510 of the Vehicle Code authorizes this Department to prohibit parking on either or both sides of a highway which has been cleared of snow, but where the width of the highway is still restricted. Where "NO PARKING" signs are required for this purpose, the standard Code R26 and R28 signs are used to indicate the areas where parking is prohibited. Within those areas where parking is permitted, it is customary to install Code R25 "PARK OFF PAVEMENT" signs at frequent intervals. Refer to Page 7-19 for further information regarding the use of no parking signs in snow areas.
- (C) Chain Control. Most districts have certain areas that are subject to annual snowfall. It is good practice to install signs reading "WATCH FOR SNOW REMOVAL EQUIPMENT," in black letters on yellow, on all highways leading to snow areas. These signs are generally placed at the lower elevations where the first snow is usually encountered. They should either be hooded or removed during the summer season.

Chain control areas are marked with signs (R76) "CHAINS REQUIRED ONE MILE AHEAD" (1.6093 kilometers) and chain signs (R75) "CHAINS REQUIRED" and (R78) "END OF CHAIN CONTROL". These signs and their standard positions are illustrated on Page 7-19, Typical Signing for Snow Areas. Within the chain control area the Department may permit as an alternate the use of snow tread tires on authorized vehicles. Standard chain signs should be in place on each side of built up areas that develop an appreciable volume of traffic. Permanent installations should be made to facilitate putting the chain signs into service by maintenance personnel.

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Permits to individuals, who must apply in person, for installing tire chains on highway right-of-way may be issued by Maintenance Area Superintendents.

Certain highways are allowed to close each winter due to heavy snow. At the beginning of these areas, signs reading "SNOW NOT REMOVED BEYOND THIS POINT--PROCEED AT YOUR OWN RISK" should be installed. Arrangements shall also be made to place signs prominently at important intersections and other advance points to inform traffic when a through route is closed by snow. Such a sign should read "_____CLOSED BY SNOW BEYOND______."

7.27 Warning Signs for Snow Areas

A typical arrangement of signs required in snow areas is shown on Figure 7-1.

Other useful signs are:

This sign may be used for general information, especially when permanent snow signs are not used.

SR20-1 – This sign should be erected at the beginning of the snow season and removed in the spring when the road is opened.

CHAINS MAY BE REQUIRED AT ANY TIME

60" X 28"
(1.524 m) X (0.711 m)
Black Letters
on White
Background

SNOW NOT REMOVED BEYOND HERE 48" X 30" (1.219 m) X (0.762 m)

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Signs with this or similar wording shall be placed at important intersections leading to those routes that are closed for the winter by snow. Quite frequently several signs will be required for this purpose. The signs shall be permanently installed, with the word "Open" placed on the sign face. The words "Closed by Snow" and "Beyond Pinecrest" shall be on detachable plates, which may be removed or changed as conditions require. The plates should be removed as soon as the road is opened.



Reflectorized (size variable) White Letters on Black Background

See Page 7-19 for Typical Signing for Snow Areas.

Refer to the Manual of Traffic Controls for further information.

TYPICAL SIGNING FOR SNOW AREAS

